

2021 Annual Report

Dakota County Library

A message from the Director, Margaret Stone

In 2021, it often felt as if we were taking two steps forward and one step back as we worked to manage the impact of the pandemic waves on library services. Despite the hurdles, Dakota County Library stepped forward in supporting our community by offering new ways to access services and restarting others as it became safe to do so.

The pandemic had many readers turning to digital books as a source for their next read. Early in the year, we launched Libby by Overdrive as our vendor for e-books, e-audiobooks and e-magazines. All metro libraries combined efforts to offer digital books in one app, making more books available to more readers. Digital circulation, which has been growing steadily, took a big leap with Libby, surpassing 1 million checkouts in 2021.

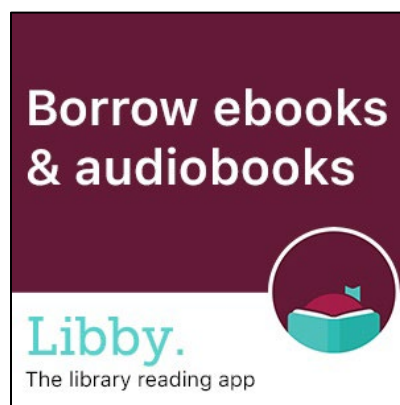
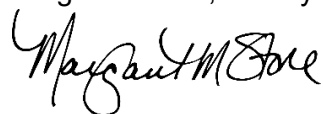
Despite the pandemic, we continued to act on our mission to cultivate community. Once the vaccine was readily available, we partnered with Dakota County Public Health to host vaccine clinics in our spaces. Even though the pandemic made it difficult to connect with others, we offered events and classes for people to gather virtually as well as safely in person.

In 2021, we took steps toward restoring hours for the nine locations, reopening the library meeting rooms and the iLAB makerspaces. We've worked hard to make it safe and easy for you to use the library and if you haven't visited your favorite library in a while, I invite you to stop by soon.

In March, Dakota County Library was named a finalist for the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Medal. Only a few public libraries across the country are recognized each year with this honor, and we are so proud to have been one of them. It is our amazing staff who are truly the key to why we received this recognition.

This year was much more challenging than any of us thought it would be, but one constant is how the library takes steps with residents toward building a successful community. This is what makes me excited about the future.

Sincerely,
Margaret Stone, Library Director



2021 By the Numbers

- **2.838 million** visits to the library website and catalog
- **923,019** in-person visits
- **371,844** uses of online research tools
- **313,331** Wi-Fi sessions
- **131,422** active library members
- **98,714** internet computer sessions
- **9,944** attended 769 in-person and virtual programs
- **4,050** meeting room reservations
- **2,306** iLAB reservations
- **140** materials mailed to customers from April through December



**3.767
million
total
checkouts**



**1.056
million
were digital
checkouts**



**45,794
curbside
appointments
154,574
items
picked up**

Resources & Expenditures

Budget: \$13,968,417

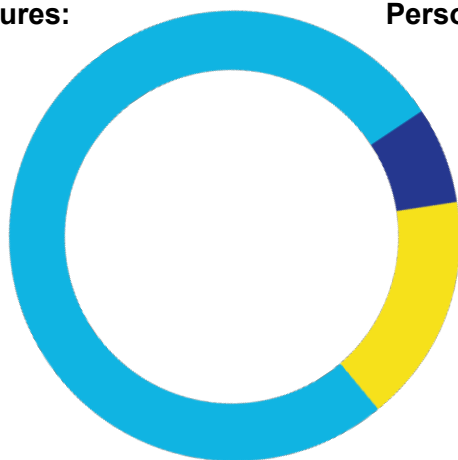
Staff: 128.86 FTE

Expenditures:

Personnel: \$10,702,166

Technology, Programs, and Services:
\$958,762

Library Materials: \$2,307,489



2021 Behind the Numbers

Awards and Recognition

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) named Dakota County Library a finalist for the 2021 National Medal for Museum and Library Service award. Thirty libraries and museums across the country were named as a finalist with our library as the only institution recognized in Minnesota. The National Medal is the nation's highest honor awarded to libraries that demonstrate a significant impact in their communities. IMLS recognized the library's work in creating accessible spaces and services, prioritizing community engagement and inclusion, and supporting residents during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing services in new ways.



The Burnhaven Library team was awarded the Community Builder Award from the City of Burnsville. Each year, the city recognizes individuals and organizations who strive to build a brighter future for the community. The Burnhaven Library was recognized for its work and collaboration with partners on the city's first Juneteenth and Pride events, serving as a precinct polling site for city elections, and offering community-driven services such as Homework Help.



Focus on Asian American and Pacific Island Voices

With the increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans, the library hosted a series of programs to raise awareness, share stories, promote peace and celebrate the significant contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in Minnesota. Overall, 245 people attended with 90% rating the programs as excellent.



Virtual Teen Job Fair

Dakota County Library collaborated with Dakota County Workforce Services to host a Virtual Teen Job Fair. The event was designed to connect teens with job opportunities, increase awareness about CareerForce services, and to strengthen our local workforce. Using a virtual platform, teens met potential employers and applied for available jobs. The fair welcomed 40 local businesses and 215 job seekers. More than 85% of the teens who responded to the survey, reported the event increased their confidence in their job searching.



2021 Behind the Numbers Cont.

Artist in Residence

We hosted our first Artist in Residence event with maker artist Sam Hightower at the Pleasant Hill, Galaxie and Heritage Library locations. The Artist in Residence program offers artists time and space to focus on their creative work, and the opportunity to serve as a mentor and interact with the public. Sam led 24 project-based workshops on a variety of topics including graphic arts, custom apparel design, 3D printing, sewing and more in a stress-free learning environment. The residency and classes were funded by the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund.



Homework Help Returns

We relaunched the Homework Help service at the Galaxie and Burnhaven locations in fall of 2021, after a 1 ½ year hiatus. From October through December, teen volunteers helped 215 students in first through 12th grade with math, science, history, reading and government homework. This service also helps meet the community's need for more teen volunteer opportunities. The response from participating youth was universally positive.



Native American and Indigenous Series

The library welcomed Red Lake Ojibwe artist Robert DesJarlait as a part of a series of events to honor the Indigenous, Native and American Indian communities throughout Dakota County. Robert created coloring sheets inspired by land and nature, which were distributed at all nine library locations. The series included both virtual and in-person events celebrating literature, storytelling, music, and the arts of Native and Indigenous communities. The series featured workshops with Minnesota author Dr. Anton Treuer, Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Anne McKeig, as well as author and educator Dr. Debbie Reese. Over 350 people attended programs in this series with 98% rating the programs as good or excellent.

